

Seminole County TDC Blue Sky Retreat Strategic Planning and Summary



Retreat At-A-Glance

Retreat Date: November 28, 2001

Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center – Oviedo, Fla.

Attendees: Jack Wert, Seminole County CVB
Kathryn Townsend, Seminole County CVB
Karen Brown, Seminole County CVB
Laura Richeson, Bennett & Company
Andy McNeil, Seminole County Human Resources
Bill Beuret, Maison et Jardin
Walt Padgett, Higgins House
Russ Hauck, City of Altamonte Springs
Pat Freeman, City of Altamonte Springs
Cindy Gennell, Winter Springs City Governments
Helen Stairs, Helen Stairs Theatre
Diana Lambird, Choice Communications
Rich Maladecki, CFHLA (guest speaker)

Following introductions and welcome by Jack Wert, the TDC Blue Sky Retreat was underway according to the agenda as seen below:

2001-2002 TDC Blue Sky Retreat Agenda

8:30 – 9:15	Marketing Research Review of 2001and Projections for 2002	Diana Lambird Choice Communications
9:15 – 10:15	Spotlight on the CVB Team and their Role (20 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Katherine Townsend, Contracts Coordinator• Karen Brown, Sales Manager• Andy McNeil, Human Resources	
10:15 – 10:30	Refreshment Break	All
10:30 – 11:15	Sales Tools and Opportunities	Karen Brown

11:15 – 12:00	Local Media Viewpoint Interactive Presentation and Q&A	Dave McDaniel NewsChannel 2 /WESH
12:00 – 1:00	Buffet Lunch	All
1:00 – 1:30	Situation Analysis (SWOT) Break Out Session	Laura Richeson
1:30 – 2:00	Discussion and Presentations	Laura Richeson / All
2:00 – 2:45	Central Florida Hospitality Industry Interactive Presentation and Q&A	Rich Maladecki CFHLA
2:45 – 3:00	Refreshment Break	All
3:00 – 3:30	Blue Sky 2002 Goals Interest Break Out Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ History ➤ Shopping ➤ Natural Adventures ➤ Events 	Laura Richeson
3:30 – 4:00	Discussion, Presentation and Closing	Laura Richeson
4:00 – 5:00	Wine and cheese reception on the lakeside deck.	

Marketing Research (see presentation attachments)

A thorough review of occupancy rates, average daily rates (ADR), economic impact, tax impact and revenue comparisons were presented for Seminole County and the surrounding Central Florida area. Additional discussion points and request for additional information included:

- ⇒ Need **geographical map** to indicate boundaries of “North Orlando” used for ADR and occupancy levels.
- ⇒ For “Airport Statistics”, Choice Communications will contact Larry Dale to tie to **in-airport data collection** opportunities for domestic travelers (with approved security clearance).
- ⇒ The **one-on-one interview techniques** and procedures will be reviewed by Jack Wert and Diana Lambird to avoid tourist confusion when approached in hotel setting and increase voluntarily data collection participation.

⇒ **Visitor profiles** will be categorized as follows to separate non-hotel revenue generating visitors and hotel revenue generators:

i. Overnight Visitors

1. Hotel
 - a. Leisure
 - b. Business
2. Airport
 - a. Leisure
 - b. Business

ii. Day-Trippers

1. Leisure
2. Business

Diana Lambird may be reached at 301/627-5214 or via email at dlambird@choicecommunications.com.

Meet the CVB Staff

Kathryn Townsend – Contracts Coordinator (see presentation and contract samples)

Tourism Development Request for Sponsored Funds Fiscal Year 2001-2002

⇒ The TDC would like to re-visit the “Event Guidelines” for TDC Sponsored Event funding including:

- i. **Establish annual financial guidelines:** Example: Year 1: \$5,000 max. as ‘seed money’ and re-evaluated annually based on performance, hotel stays and event growth for a maximum number of years.
- ii. **Re-evaluate current 2-day duration and 100 hotel room night requirements** for events to allow consideration for large drive market and ‘day-trippers’ events such as:
 1. Lake Mary Arts Festival
 2. Sanford Heritage Festival
- iii. **Establish criteria for event advertising** in local and drive market mediums, such as print and radio based on percentage of funding.

⇒ Additional ideas for the TDC Sponsored Events included:

- i. Review of all **2001 sponsored events as potential 2002** continued events to place on **master calendar** for reference during each TDC meeting when sponsorships are presented and considered in addition to budget to be presented in January 2002.
- ii. Development of **Event Tool Kit** including timelines and standard templates for marketing efforts including, logo, website link instruction, news release information, on-site distribution opportunities, etc. to increase cross-promotion of Seminole County hotels and attractions to event visitors before and during event.

Additional Statue, Budget and Contracts Discussion

Following the completion of the 2000-2001 budget to be presented in January 2002, the TDC will recommend and review a **separate line item for current and future funding for the Central Florida Zoo** for adjustments if deemed necessary.

Andy McNeil – Program Manager, Human Resources Department

⇒ Seminole County is currently in progress to **build a database of private sector HR contacts** for sales outreach efforts for corporate visitors (short and long-term) as well as tie to relocation education efforts and new employee orientation.

⇒ Internally, Seminole County will **utilize the county intranet for Email campaigns** such as Family & Friends and ongoing education and in-county promotion with Seminole Shorts. All county commissioners will also be included on Email communications.

Karen Brown, Sales Manager (see presentation attachments)

In addition to current sales committees and campaigns, Karen Brown will attend the following **targeted sales missions** to promote Seminole County to travel agents, tour operators and consumers as a unique destination location.

Committees

Seminole Sales Action Committee SSAC
Nature Heritage Committee

Monthly
Quarterly - Next Meeting: Jan 10, 2002

Sales Missions – 1st Quarter 2002

Boston Vacation Expo	Jan 11-13, 2002
Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA)	Jan 29-Feb 1, 2002
American Bus Association and post-show FAM tours	Feb 3-7, 2002
TravelSouth	Feb 23-27, 2002

Sales Tools and Opportunities

Four key sales efforts were presented as current opportunities for hotels and attractions to increase brand awareness and drive sales.

Front Desk and Sales Training – the new destination video has been provided to all hotel sales managers to use for employee training. A SSAC committee has been dedicated to internal education including concierge FAM tours.

Hot Vacation Deals – vacation booking is now available online with Hot Deals. Themed packages are available such as *Discover the St. Johns*, *Tee It Up In Style*, *Paradise Found-Naturally and Speed*, *Space, Sea and Seminole*. Hotels and Attractions may sign up for a minimal annual fee for online promotion and direct booking.

Family & Friends – a FREE campaign offered to hotels and attractions that offer “book 2 night, get 1 free” or 20% off attraction admission rates. Family & Friends is promoted online, via editorial media coverage and beginning in early 2002 via increased billboard, print ad and radio coverage.

Inside Seminole (www.visitseminole.com) - is a new sub-site designed just for tourism professionals including TDC announcements, meeting minutes, sales leads (via password login) sales opportunities and more. All hotel and attractions employees are invited to visit this site often for continued education and self-promotion of Seminole County.

Local Media Viewpoint

Dave McDaniel of WESH/Channel2 was not able to join us during the retreat, but has been invited to speak at the March 2002 TDC meeting for a local media viewpoint on Seminole County tourism.

Situation Analysis

Collectively, the retreat participants identified the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Seminole County tourism.**

Strengths

- ⇒ Price
- ⇒ Not Crowded
- ⇒ Location
- ⇒ Variety
- ⇒ Balanced target market
- ⇒ Unique niche
- ⇒ Brand consistency
- ⇒ Historical assets
- ⇒ Shopping – 3 Malls
- ⇒ Transportation - Airport
- ⇒ Space Coast proximity
- ⇒ Cruise port
- ⇒ Close by beaches
- ⇒ Water sports / events
- ⇒ Sports facilities

Weaknesses

- ⇒ Not widely known “brand awareness”
- ⇒ Meeting space
- ⇒ Internal education – employees and residents
- ⇒ Resources – lack of education
- ⇒ Corporate sponsors
- ⇒ Lack of arts and culture facilities
- ⇒ Development of assets

Opportunities

- ⇒ Value / value added
- ⇒ All inclusive packages
- ⇒ Regional partnerships
- ⇒ Daytona events
- ⇒ New sports events (Golden Age Games)
- ⇒ Include more local business (increase involvement)

Threats

- ⇒ Under participation
- ⇒ Funding and viewed as non-essential
- ⇒ “Weaker” Economy
- ⇒ Decrease in leisure travel and business expenditures for travel
- ⇒ Decrease in corporate training (extended stay)

Overall Goals for 2002 – In Order of Priority

Level I Goals – Short Term Goals

- ⇒ **Increase funding** for marketing
 - i. Identify **new sources of revenue** such as outlining area hotels, membership, co-op marketing and paid visitor guide.
- ⇒ Activate **sports marketing campaign**
- ⇒ Launch **local awareness campaign** – “Family & Friends”
 - i. Media coverage
 - ii. Guest services education
- ⇒ Implement **new category for “Arts and Culture”** for TDC sponsored events
- ⇒ **Development of TDC Sponsored Events**
 - i. Event Tool Kit (see above for details)
 - ii. Funding guidelines
 - iii. Hotel stay requirements and annual funding max.
- ⇒ Develop comprehensive annual **Visitor Guide**

Level II – Mid Term Goals

- ⇒ Expand **sports facilities usage** terms
- ⇒ Expand **Daytona event** opportunities
- ⇒ Develop **regional campaigns** (i.e., Space Coast)

Guest Speaker: Rich Maladecki, Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association

The Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association (CFHLA), along with other regional tourism related organizations and officials, will launch a **united PR and advertising campaign in support of Central Florida tourism** in response to pending coverage the downside of tourism in the Orlando Sentinel (December 2001).

CFHLA has committed to **increased participation as a regional partner** in Seminole County TDC meetings, events and campaigns for 2002.

Rich Maladecki, president of CFHLA may be reached at 407/313-5000 or via email at rjmcfhla@aol.com.

Additional Brainstorming and Generated Ideas

⇒ **Establish local, unique tours** (or designated open house days) that would be available to both residents and tourists including:

- Siemens/Westinghouse
- Orlando Sanford Airport
- Mohawk Canoe Factory
- Seminole Herald
- Seminole County Courthouse
- Custom Van Design Factory
- Amtrak AutoTrain

⇒ Conduct **small business 'how to' marketing workshops** including self-promotion and sales opportunities for local vendors.

All retreat ideas will be woven into a comprehensive marketing plan for 2002. Thanks to all for your support and participation.

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